THE LORD OF MISRULE

ALFRED NOYES

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THE LORD OF MISRULE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

DRAKE: AN ENGLISH EPIC

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND AND OTHER POEMS

SHERWOOD

TALES OF THE MERMAID TAVERN

THE WINE-PRESS

COLLECTED POEMS. 2 VOLS.

A BELGIAN CHRISTMAS EVE (RADA)

Come up, come in with streamers!
Come in with boughs of May!

Page 1.

THE LORD OF MISRULE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ALFRED NOYES

WITH FRONTISPIECE IN COLOURS BY SPENCER BAIRD NICHOLS

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THE LORD OF MISRULE

"On May days the wild heads of the parish would choose a Lord of Misrule, whom they would follow even into the church, though the minister were at prayer or preaching, dancing and swinging their may-boughs about like devils incarnate."— *Old Puritan Writer.*

ALL on a fresh May morning, I took my love to church,
To see if Parson Primrose were safely on his perch.
He scarce had got to *Thirdly,* or squire begun to snore,
When, like a sun-lit sea-wave,
A green and crimson sea-wave,
A frolic of madcap May-folk came whooping through the door: —

Come up, come in with streamers!
Come in, with boughs of may!
Come up and thump the sexton,
And carry the clerk away.

Now skip like rams, ye mountains,
Ye little hills, like sheep!
Come up and wake the people
That parson puts to sleep.

They tickled their nut-brown tabors. Their garlands flew in showers,
And lasses and lads came after them, with feet like dancing flowers.
Their queen had torn her green gown, and bared a shoulder as white,
O, white as the may that crowned her,
While all the minstrels round her
Tilted back their crimson hats and sang for sheer delight:

Come up, come in with streamers!
Come in, with boughs of may!
Now by the gold upon your toe
You walked the primrose way.
Come up, with white and crimson!
O, shake your bells and sing;
Let the porch bend, the pillars bow,
Before our Lord, the Spring!

The dusty velvet hassocks were dabbled with
fragrant dew.
The font grew white with hawthorn. It frothed
in every pew.
Three petals clung to the sexton's beard as he
mopped and mowed at the clerk,
And "Take that sexton away," they cried;
"Did Nebuchadnezzar eat may?" they
cried.
"Nay, that was a prize from Betty," they cried,
"for kissing her in the dark."

Come up, come in with streamers!
Come in, with boughs of may!
Who knows but old Methuselah
May hobble the green-wood way?
If Betty could kiss the sexton,
If Kitty could kiss the clerk,
Who knows how Parson Primrose
Might blossom in the dark?

The congregation spluttered. The squire grew
purple and all,
And every little chorister bestrode his carven stall.

The parson flapped like a magpie, but none could
hear his prayers;
For Tom Fool flourished his tabor,
Flourished his nut-brown tabor,
Bashed the head of the sexton, and stormed the
pulpit stairs.

High in the old oak pulpit
This Lord of all misrule —
I think it was Will Summers
That once was Shakespeare's fool —
Held up his hand for silence,
And all the church grew still:
"And are you snoring yet," he said,
"Or have you slept your fill?

"Your God still walks in Eden, between the
ancient trees,
Where Youth and Love go wading through pools
of primroses.
And this is the sign we bring you, before the
darkness fall,

That Spring is risen, is risen again,
That Life is risen, is risen again,
That Love is risen, is risen again, and Love is
Lord of all.

"At Paske began our morrice
And, ere Pentecost, our May;
Because, albeit your words be true,
You know not what you say.
You chatter in church like jackdaws,
Words that would wake the dead,
Were there one breath of life in you,
One drop of blood," he said.

"*He died and He went down to hell!* You know
not what you mean.
Our rafters were of green fir. Also our beds
were green.
But out of the mouth of a fool, a fool, before
the darkness fall,
We tell you He is risen again,
The Lord of Life is risen again,

The boughs put forth their tender buds, and
Love is Lord of all!"

He bowed his head. He stood so still,
They bowed their heads as well.
And softly from the organ-loft
The song began to swell.
Come up with blood-red streamers,
The reeds began the strain.
The *vox humana* pealed on high,
The Spring is risen again!

The *vox angelica* replied — *The shadows flee away!*
Our house-beams were of cedar. Come in, with boughs of may!
The *diapason* deepened it — *Before the darkness fall,*
We tell you He is risen again!
Our God hath burst His prison again!
Christ is risen, is risen again; and Love is Lord of all.

THE REPEAL

I DREAMED the Eternal had repealed
His cosmic code of law last night.
Our prayers had made the Unchanging yield.
Caprice was king from depth to height.

On Beachy Head a shouting throng
Had fired a beacon to proclaim
Their licence. With unmeasured song
They proved it, dancing in the flame.

They quarrelled. One desired the sun,
And one desired the stars to shine.
They closed and wrestled and burned as one,
And the white chalk grew red as wine.

The furnace licked and purred and rolled,
A laughing child held up its hands
Like dreadful torches, dropping gold;
For pain was dead at their commands.

Painless and wild as clouds they burned,
Till the restricted Rose of Day
With all its glorious laws returned,
And the wind blew their ashes away.

THE SEARCH-LIGHTS

"Political morality differs from individual morality because there is no power above the state."

SHADOW by shadow, stripped for fight,
The lean black cruisers search the sea.
Night-long their level shafts of light
Revolve, and find no enemy.
Only they know each leaping wave
May hide the lightning, and their grave.

And in the land they guard so well
Is there no silent watch to keep?
An age is dying, and the bell
Rings midnight on a vaster deep.
But over all its waves, once more,
The search-lights move, from shore to shore.

And captains that we thought were dead,
And dreamers that we thought were dumb,
And voices that we thought were fled,

Arise, and call us, and we come;
And " search in thine own soul," they cry;
" For there, too, lurks thine enemy."

Search for the foe in thine own soul,
The sloth, the intellectual pride;
The trivial jest that veils the goal
For which our fathers lived and died;
The lawless dreams, the cynic Art,
That rend thy nobler self apart.

Not far, not far into the night,
These level swords of light can pierce;
Yet for her faith does England fight,
Her faith in this our universe;
Believing Truth and Justice draw
From founts of everlasting law;

Therefore a Power above the State,
The unconquerable Power returns.
The fire, the fire that made her great
Once more upon her altar burns.
Once more, redeemed and healed and whole,
She moves to the Eternal Goal.

FORWARD

A THOUSAND creeds and battle-cries,
A thousand warring social schemes,
A thousand new moralities,
And twenty thousand thousand dreams!

Each on his own anarchic way,
From the old order breaking free,—
Our ruined world desires, you say,
Licence, once more, not Liberty.

But ah, beneath the struggling foam,
When storm and change are on the deep,
How quietly the tides come home,
And how the depths of sea-shine sleep;

And we who march towards a goal,
Destroying only to fulfil
The law, the law of that great soul
Which moves beneath your alien will;

FORWARD

We, that like foemen meet the past
  Because we bring the future, know
We only fight to achieve at last
  A great re-union with our foe;

Re-union in the truths that stand
  When all our wars are rolled away;
Re-union of the heart and hand
  And of the prayers wherewith we pray;

Re-union in the common needs,
  The common strivings of mankind;
Re-union of our warring creeds
  In the one God that dwells behind.

Then — in that day — we shall not meet
  Wrong with new wrong, but right with right;
Our faith shall make your faith complete
  When our battalions re-unite.

Forward! — what use in idle words? —
  Forward, O warriors of the soul!
There will be breaking up of swords
  When that new morning makes us whole.

A SPELL

(*An Excellent Way to get a Fairy*)

GATHER, first, in your left hand
(This must be at fall of day)
Forty grains of wild sea-sand
Where you think a mermaid lay.
I have heard that it is best
If you gather it, warm and sweet,
Out of the dint of her left breast
Where you see her heart has beat.

Out of the dint in that sweet sand
Gather forty grains, I say;
Yet — if it fail you — understand,
There remains a better way.

Out of this you melt your glass
While the veils of night are drawn,
Whispering, till the shadows pass,
"Nixie — pixie — leprechaun!"
Then you blow your magic vial,

A SPELL

Shape it like a crescent moon,
Set it up and make your trial,
Singing, *"Elaby, ah, come soon!"*

Round the cloudy crescent go,
On the hill-top, in the dawn,
Singing softly, on tip-toe,
"Elaby Gathon! Elaby Gathon!
Nixie — pixie — leprechaun!"

Bring the blood of a white hen
Slaughtered at the break of day,
While the cock, in the fairy glen,
Thrusts his gold neck every way,
Over the brambles, peering, calling,
Under the ferns, with a sudden fear,
Far and wide — as the dews are falling —
Clamouring, calling, everywhere.

Round the crimson vial go,
On the hill-top, in the dawn,
Singing softly, on tip-toe,
"Nixie — pixie — leprechaun!"
If this fail, at break of day,
I can show you a better way.

A SPELL

Bring the buds of the hazel-copse,
  Where two lovers kissed at noon;
Bring the crushed red wild-thyme tops
  Where they murmured under the moon.
Bring the four-leaved clover also,
  One of the white, and one of the red,
Bring the flakes of the may that fall so
  Lightly over their bridal bed.

Drop them into the vial — so —
  On the hill-top, in the dawn,
Singing softly, on tip-toe,
  "Nixie — pixie — leprechaun!"
And, if once will not suffice,
  Do it thrice!
If this fail, at break of day,
There remains a better way.

Bring an old and crippled child
  — *Ah, tread softly, on tip-toe!* —
Tattered, tearless, wonder-wild,
  From that under-world below,
Bring a wizened child of seven

A SPELL

Reeking from the City slime,
Out of hell into your heaven,
Set her knee-deep in the thyme.

Feed her — clothe her — even so!
Set her on a fairy-throne.
When her eyes begin to glow
Leave her for an hour — alone.

You shall need no spells or charms,
On that hill-top, in that dawn.
When she lifts her wasted arms,
You shall see a veil withdrawn.
There shall be no veil between them,
Though her head be old and wise!
You shall know that she has seen them
By the glory in her eyes.

Round her irons on that hill
Earth has tossed a fairy fire:
Watch, and listen, and be still,
Lest you baulk your own desire.

When she sees four azure wings
Light upon her claw-like hand;

A SPELL

When she lifts her head and sings,
  You shall hear and understand:
You shall hear a bugle calling
  Wildly over the dew-dashed down;
And a sound as of the falling
  Ramparts of a conquered town.

You shall hear a sound like thunder;
  And a veil shall be withdrawn,
When her eyes grow wide with wonder
  On that hill-top, in that dawn.

CRIMSON SAILS

WHEN Salomon sailed from Ophir . . .
The clouds of Sussex thyme
That crown the cliffs in mid-July
Were all we needed — you and I —
But Salomon sailed from Ophir,
And broken bits of rhyme
Blew to us on the white chalk coast
From O, what elfin clime?

A peacock butterfly flaunted
Its four great crimson wings,
As over the edge of the chalk it flew
Black as a ship on the Channel blue . . .
When Salomon sailed from Ophir,—
He brought, as the high sun brings,
Honey and spice to the Queen of the South,
Sussex or Saba, a song for her mouth,
Sweet as the dawn-wind over the downs
And the tall white cliffs that the wild thyme crowns
A song that the whole sky sings: —

CRIMSON SAILS

When Salomon sailed from Ophir,
With Olliphants and gold,
The kings went up, the kings went down,
Trying to match King Salomon's crown,
But Salomon sacked the sunset,
Wherever his black ships rolled.
He rolled it up like a crimson cloth,
And crammed it into his hold.

Chorus: Salomon sacked the sunset!
Salomon sacked the sunset!
He rolled it up like a crimson cloth,
And crammed it into his hold.

His masts were Lebanon cedars,
His sheets were singing blue,
But that was never the reason why
He stuffed his hold with the sunset sky!
The kings could cut their cedars,
And sail from Ophir, too;
But Salomon packed his heart with dreams
And all the dreams were true.

Chorus: The kings could cut their cedars,
Cut their Lebanon cedars;

But Salomon packed his heart with dreams,
And all the dreams were true.

When Salomon sailed from Ophir,
He sailed not as a king.
The kings — they weltered to and fro,
Tossed wherever the winds could blow;
But Salomon's tawny seamen
Could lift their heads and sing,
Till all their crowded clouds of sail
Grew sweeter than the Spring.

Chorus: Their singing sheets grew sweeter,
Their crowded clouds grew sweeter,
For Salomon's tawny seamen, sirs,
Could lift their heads and sing:

When Salomon sailed from Ophir
With crimson sails so tall,
The kings went up, the kings went down,
Trying to match King Salomon's crown;
But Salomon brought the sunset
To hang on his Temple wall;
He rolled it up like a crimson cloth,
So his was better than all.

Chorus: Salomon gat the sunset,
Salomon gat the sunset;
He carried it like a crimson cloth
To hang on his Temple wall.

BLIND MOONE OF LONDON

BLIND MOONE of London
He fiddled up and down,
Thrice for an angel,
And twice for a crown.
He fiddled at the *Green Man,*
He fiddled at the *Rose;*
And where they have buried him
Not a soul knows.

All his tunes are dead and gone, dead as yesterday.
And his lanthorn flits no more
Round the *Devil Tavern* door,
Waiting till the gallants come, singing from the play;
Waiting in the wet and cold!
All his Whitsun tales are told.
He is dead and gone, sirs, very far away.

He would not give a silver groat
For good or evil weather.

He carried in his white cap
A long red feather.
He wore a long coat
Of the Reading-tawny kind,
And darned white hosen
With a blue patch behind.

So — one night — he shuffled past, in his buckled shoon.
We shall never see his face,
Twisted to that queer grimace,
Waiting in the wind and rain, till we called his tune;
Very whimsical and white,
Waiting on a blue Twelfth Night!
He is grown too proud at last — old blind Moone.

Yet, when May was at the door,
And Moone was wont to sing,
Many a maid and bachelor
Whirled into the ring:
Standing on a tilted wain
He played so sweet and loud
The Mayor forgot his golden chain
And jigged it with the crowd.

BLIND MOONE OF LONDON

Old blind Moone, his fiddle scattered flowers
along the street;
Into the dust of Brookfield Fair
Carried a shining primrose air,
Crooning like a poor mad maid, O, very low and
sweet,
Drew us close, and held us bound,
Then — to the tune of *Pedlar's Pound,*
Caught us up, and whirled us round, a thousand
frolic feet.

Master Shakespeare was his host.
The tribe of Benjamin
Used to call him Merlin's Ghost
At the *Mermaid Inn.*
He was only a crowder,
Fiddling at the door.
Death has made him prouder.
We shall not see him more.

Only — if you listen, please — through the mas-
ter's themes,
You shall hear a wizard strain,
Blind and bright as wind and rain

BLIND MOONE OF LONDON

Shaken out of willow-trees, and shot with elfin
gleams.
How should I your true love know?
Scraps and snatches — even so!
That is old blind Moone again, fiddling in your
dreams.

Once, when Will had called for sack
And bidden him up and play,
Old blind Moone, he turned his back,
Growled, and walked away,
Sailed into a thunder-cloud,
Snapped his fiddle-string,
And hobbled from *The Mermaid*
Sulky as a king.

Only from the darkness now, steals the strain
we knew:
No one even knows his grave!
Only here and there a stave,
Out of all his hedge-row flock, be-drips the may
with dew.

And I know not what wild bird
Carried us his parting word: —
Master Shakespeare needn't take the crowder's fiddle, too.

Will has wealth and wealth to spare.
Give him back his own.
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.
See his little lanthorn-spark.
Hear his ghostly tune,
Glimmering past you, in the dark,
Old blind Moone!

All the little crazy brooks, where love and sorrow run
Crowned with sedge and singing wild,
Like a sky-lark — or a child! —
Old blind Moone, he knew their springs, and played 'em every one;
Stood there, in the darkness, blind,
And sang them into Shakespeare's mind. . .

BLIND MOONE OF LONDON

Old blind Moone of London, O now his songs
are done,
The light upon his lost white face, they say it
was the sun!

The light upon his poor old face, they say it was
the sun!

OLD GREY SQUIRREL

A GREAT while ago, there was a school-boy.
He lived in a cottage by the sea.
And the very first thing he could remember
Was the rigging of the schooners by the quay.

He could watch them, when he woke, from his window,
With the tall cranes hoisting out the freight.
And he used to think of shipping as a sea-cook,
And sailing to the Golden Gate.

For he used to buy the yellow penny dreadfuls,
And read them where he fished for conger eels,
And listened to the lapping of the water,
The green and oily water round the keels.

There were trawlers with their shark-mouthed
flat-fish,
And red nets hanging out to dry,
And the skate the skipper kept because he liked
'em,
And landsmen never knew the fish to fry.

There were brigantines with timber out of
Norroway,
Oozing with the syrups of the pine.
There were rusty dusty schooners out of Sun-
derland,
And ships of the Blue Cross line.

And to tumble down a hatch into the cabin
Was better than the best of broken rules;
For the smell of 'em was like a Christmas dinner,
And the feel of 'em was like a box of tools.

And, before he went to sleep in the evening,
The very last thing that he could see
Was the sailor-men a-dancing in the moonlight
By the capstan that stood upon the quay.

OLD GREY SQUIRREL

He is perched upon a high stool in London.
The Golden Gate is very far away.
They caught him, and they caged him, like a squirrel.
He is totting up accounts, and going grey.

He will never, never, never sail to 'Frisco.
But the very last thing that he will see
Will be sailor-men a-dancing in the sunrise
By the capstan that stands upon the quay. . . .

To the tune of an old concertina,
By the capstan that stands upon the quay.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

JUST as the moon was rising, I met a ghostly pedlar
Singing for company beneath his ghostly load,—
Once, there were velvet lads with vizards on their faces,
Riding up to rob me on the great North Road.

Now, my pack is heavy, and my pocket full of guineas
Chimes like a wedding-peal, but little I enjoy
Roads that never echo to the chirrup of their canter,—
The gay Golden Farmer and the Hereford Boy.

Rogues were they all, but their raid was from Elf-land!
Shod with elfin silver were the steeds they bestrode.

Merlin buckled on the spurs that wheeled thro' the wet fern
Bright as Jack-o'-Lanthorns off the great North Road.

Tales were told in country inns when Turpin rode to Rippleside!
Puck tuned the fiddle-strings, and country maids grew coy,
Tavern doors grew magical when Colonel Jack might tap at them,
The gay Golden Farmer and the Hereford Boy.

What are you seeking then? I asked this honest pedlar.
— O, Mulled Sack or Natty Hawes might ease me of my load! —
Where are they flown then? — Flown where I follow;
They are all gone for ever up the great North Road.

Rogues were they all; but the white dust assoils
'em!
Paradise without a spice of deviltry would cloy.
Heavy is my pack till I meet with Jerry Abershaw,
The gay Golden Farmer and the Hereford Boy.

THE RIVER OF STARS

(A tale of Niagara)

THE lights of a hundred cities are fed by its
midnight power.
Their wheels are moved by its thunder. But they,
too, have their hour.
The tale of the Indian lovers, a cry from the years
that are flown,
While the river of stars is rolling,
Rolling away to the darkness,
Abides with the power in the midnight, where love
may find its own.

She watched from the Huron tents, till the first
star shook in the air.
The sweet pine scented her fawn-skins, and
breathed from her braided hair.

Her crown was of milk-white blood-root, because
of the tryst she would keep,
Beyond the river of beauty
That drifted away in the darkness
Drawing the sunset thro' lilies, with eyes like
stars, to the deep.

He watched, like a tall young wood-god, from the
red pine that she named;
But not for the peril behind him, where the eyes
of the Mohawks flamed.
Eagle-plumed he stood. But his heart was
hunting afar,
Where the river of longing whispered . . .
And one swift shaft from the darkness
Felled him, her name in his death-cry, his eyes
on the sunset star.

. . . . . .

She stole from the river and listened. The moon
on her wet skin shone.
As a silver birch in a pine-wood, her beauty
flashed and was gone.

There was no wave in the forest. The dark arms
closed her round.
But the river of life went flowing,
Flowing away to the darkness,
For her breast grew red with his heart's blood, in
a night where the stars are drowned.

Teach me, O my lover, as you taught me of love
in a day,
Teach me of death, and for ever, and set my feet
on the way,
To the land of the happy shadows, the land where
you are flown.
— And the river of death went weeping,
Weeping away to the darkness.—
Is the hunting good, my lover, so good that you
hunt alone?

She rose to her feet like a shadow. She sent a
cry thro' the night,
Sa-sa-kuon, the death-whoop, that tells of triumph
in fight.

It broke from the bell of her mouth like the cry
of a wounded bird,
But the river of agony swelled it
And swept it along to the darkness,
And the Mohawks, couched in the darkness, leapt
to their feet as they heard.

Close as the ring of the clouds that menace the
moon with death,
At once they circled her round. Her bright
breast panted for breath.
With only her own wild glory keeping the wolves
at bay,
While the river of parting whispered,
Whispered away to the darkness,
She looked in their eyes for a moment, and
strove for a word to say.

Teach me, O my lover! — She set her foot on the
dead.
She laughed on the painted faces with their rings
of yellow and red,—

I thank you, wolves of the Mohawk, for a woman's hands might fail.—
— And the river of vengeance chuckled,
Chuckled away to the darkness,—
But ye have killed where I hunted. I have come to the end of my trail.

I thank you, braves of the Mohawk, who laid this thief at my feet.
He tore my heart out living, and tossed it his dogs to eat.
Ye have taught him of death in a moment, as he taught me of love in a day.
— And the river of passion deepened,
Deepened and rushed to the darkness.—
And yet may a woman requite you, and set your feet on the way.

For the woman that spits in my face, and the shaven heads that gibe,
This night shall a woman show you the tents of the Huron tribe.

They are lodged in a deep valley. With all things good it abounds.
Where the red-eyed, green-mooned river
Glides like a snake to the darkness,
I will show you a valley, Mohawks, like the Happy Hunting Grounds.

Follow! They chuckled, and followed like wolves to the glittering stream.
Shadows obeying a shadow, they launched their canoes in a dream.
Alone, in the first, with the blood on her breast, and her milk-white crown,
She stood. She smiled at them, *Follow,*
Then urged her canoe to the darkness,
And, silently flashing their paddles, the Mohawks followed her down.

. . . . . .

And now — as they slid thro' the pine-woods with their peaks of midnight blue,
She heard, in the broadening distance, the deep sound that she knew,

A mutter of steady thunder that grew as they glanced along;
But ever she glanced before them
And glanced away to the darkness,
And or ever they heard it rightly, she raised her voice in a song: —

The wind from the Isles of the Blesséd, it blows across the foam.
It sings in the flowing maples of the land that was my home.
Where the moose is a morning's hunt, and the buffalo feeds from the hand.—
And the river of mockery broadened,
Broadened and rolled to the darkness —
And the green maize lifts its feathers, and laughs the snow from the land.

The river broadened and quickened. There was nought but river and sky.
The shores were lost in the darkness. She laughed and lifted a cry:

Follow me! Sa-sa-kuon! Swifter and swifter they swirled —
And the flood of their doom went flying,
Flying away to the darkness,
Follow me, follow me, Mohawks, ye are shooting the edge of the world.

They struggled like snakes to return. Like straws they were whirled on her track.
For the whole flood swooped to that edge where the unplumbed night dropt black,
The whole flood dropt to a thunder in an unplumbed hell beneath,
And over the gulf of the thunder
A mountain of spray from the darkness
Rose and stood in the heavens, like a shrouded image of death.

She rushed like a star before them. The moon on her glorying shone.
Teach me, O my lover,— her cry flashed out and was gone.

A moment they battled behind her. They lashed with their paddles and lunged;
Then the Mohawks, turning their faces
Like a blood-stained cloud to the darkness,
Over the edge of Niagara swept together and plunged.

And the lights of a hundred cities are fed by the ancient power;
But a cry returns with the midnight; for they, too, have their hour.
Teach me, O my lover, as you taught me of love in a day,
— While the river of stars is rolling,
Rolling away to the darkness,—
Teach me of death, and for ever, and set my feet on the way!

A KNIGHT OF OLD JAPAN

MAKE me a stave of song, the Master said,
On yonder cherry-bough, whose white and red
Hangs in the sunset over those green seas.
The young knight looked upon his untried blade,
Then shrugged his wings of gold and blue brocade:
How should a warrior play with thoughts like these?

Fresh from the battle, in that self-same hour,
A mail-clad warrior watched each delicate flower
Close in that cloud of beauty against the West.
Drinking the last deep light, he watched it long.
He raised his face as if to pray. *The strong,*
The Master whispered, *are the tenderest.*

BEYOND DEATH

I

IN lonely bays
Where Love runs wild,
All among the flowering grasses,
Where light, light, light, as a sea-bird's wing
The chuckle of the child-god passes,
O, to awake, to shake away the night
And find you dreaming there,
On the other side of death, with the sea-wind
blowing round you,
And the scent of the thyme in your hair.

II

Tho' beauty perish,
Perish like a flower,
And song be an idle breath,

Tho' heaven be a dream, and youth for but an hour,
And life much less than death,
And the Maker less than that He made,
And hope less than despair,
If Death have shores where Love runs wild
I think you might be there.

III

Re-born, re-born
From the splendid sea,
There should you awake and sing,
With every supple sweet from the head to the feet
Modelled like a wood-dove's wing,—
O, to awake, to shake away the night,
And find you happy there,
On the other side of death, with the sea-wind blowing round you,
And the scent of the thyme in your hair.

THE STRANGE GUEST

YOU cannot leave a new house
With any open door,
But a strange guest will enter it
And never leave it more.

Build it on a waste land,
Dreary as a sin.
Leave her but a broken gate,
And Beauty will come in.

Build it all of scarlet brick.
Work your wicked will.
Dump it on an ash-heap
Then — O then, be still.

Sit and watch your new house.
Leave an open door.
A strange guest will enter it
And never leave it more.

She will make your raw wood
  Mellower than gold.
She will take your new lamps
  And sell them for old.

She will crumble all your pride,
  Break your folly down.
Much that you rejected
  She will bless and crown.

She will rust your naked roof,
  Split your pavement through,
Dip her brush in sun and moon
  And colour it anew.

Leave her but a window
  Wide to wind and rain,
You shall find her footsteps
  When you come again.

Though she keep you waiting
  Many months or years,
She shall stain and make it
  Beautiful with tears.

She shall hurt and heal it,
  Soften it and save,
Blessing it, until it stand
  Stronger than the grave.

You cannot leave a new house
  With any open door,
But a strange guest will enter it
  And never leave it more.

GHOSTS

O TO creep in by candle-light,
When all the world is fast asleep,
Out of the cold winds, out of the night,
Where the nettles wave and the rains weep!
O, to creep in, lifting the latch
So quietly that no soul could hear,
And, at those embers in the gloom,
Quietly light one careful match —
You should not hear it, have no fear —
And light the candle and look round
The old familiar room;
To see the old books upon the wall
And lovingly take one down again,
And hear — O, strange to those that lay
So patiently underground —
The ticking of the clock, the sound
Of clicking embers . . .
watch the play

Of shadows . . .
till the implacable call
Of morning turn our faces grey;
And, or ever we go, we lift and kiss
Some idle thing that your hands may touch,
Some paper or book that your hands let fall,
And we never — when living — had cared so much
As to glance upon twice . . .
But now, O bliss
To kiss and to cherish it, moaning our pain,
Ere we creep to the silence again.

THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

DAZZLE of the sea, azure of the sky, glitter
of the dew on the grass,
Pass to Oblivion
In the darkness
With all that ever is or ever was.

Yet, O flocks of cloud with your violet snadows,
O white may crowding o'er the lane,
The Shepherd that drives you
To the darkness
Shall lead you thro' the crimson dawn again.

Bear your load of beauty to the sunset, and the
golden gates of death.
The Eternal shall remember
In the darkness
And recall you at a word, at a breath.

THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Even as the mind of a man may remember his
lost and linkless hours,
This world that is scattered
To the darkness
Dismembered and dis-petalled, clouds and
flowers,

Cities, suns, and systems, as He said of old, they
sleep! Not a bird, not a leaf shall
pass by,
But on the day of remembrance
In the darkness,
In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,

They shall flash to their places in the music of the
whole, even as our fathers said!
For a Power shall remember
In the darkness,
And the universal sea give up her dead.

ON THE EMBANKMENT

WITHIN, it was colour and laughter,
warmth and wine.
Without, it was darkness, hunger and bitter
cold,
Where those white globes on the wet Embank-
ment shine,
Greasing the Thames with gold.

And was it a bundle of fog in the dark drew nigh?
A bundle of rags and bones it crept to the
light,—
A monstrous thing that coughed as it shuffled by,
A shape of the shapeless night,

Spawned as brown things that mimic their
mothering earth,
Green creeping things that the grass lifts to
the sun,

Out of its wrongs the City had brought to the birth
The shape of those wrongs, in one.

A woman, a woman whose lips had once been kissed,
(It was Christmas Eve, and the bells began their chime!)
She sank to a seat like a coughing bundle of mist
Exhaled from the river-slime.

Bells for the birth of Christ! She heard, and she thought —
Vacantly — of her man, that was long since dead,
The smell of the Christmas food, and the drink they had bought
Together, the year they were wed.

She thought of their one-room home, and the night-long sigh
Recalled, as he slept, of his breath in her loosened hair.

He slept. She opened her haggard eyes with a cry.
But only the night was there.

Nay, out of the formless night, at her furtive glance,
Crouched at the end of her cold wet bench, there grew
A bundle of fog, a bundle of rags that, perchance,
Once was a woman, too.

A huddled shape, a fungus of foul grey mist
Spawned of the river, in peace and much good-will,
And even the woman whose lips had once been kissed
Wondered, it crouched so still.

No breath, no shadow of breath in the lamp-light smoked,
It crouched so still — that bunch at the bench's end.
She stretched her neck like a crow, then leaned and croaked,
"A Merry Christmas, friend!"

She rose, and peered, peered at its vacant eyes.
Touched its cold claws. Its arms of knotted bone
Were wands of ice; like iron rods the thighs;
The left breast — like a stone.

Far, far along the rows of warmth and light
The Christmas waits, with cornet and bassoon,
Carolled "While shepherds watched their flocks by night."
The bells pealed to the moon.

A bundle of rags and bones, a bundle of mist,
And never a hell or heaven to hear or see,
The woman, the woman whose lips had once been kissed,
Knelt down feverishly.

She plucked the shawl out of that frozen clutch.
The dead are dead. Why should the living freeze?
She touched the cold flesh that she feared to touch
Kneeling upon her knees.

ON THE EMBANKMENT

Her palsied hands unlaced the shoes — good shoes! —
She tore them quick from the crooked yellow feet.
If Death be generous, why should Life refuse
To take, and pawn, and eat?

A heavy step drew nearer thro' the mist.
She bundled them into the shawl. Her eyes were bright.
The woman, the woman whose lips had once been kissed,
Slunk, chuckling, thro' the night.

THE IRON CROWN

NOT memory of a vanished bliss,
But suddenly to know,
I had forgotten! This, O this
With iron crowned my woe:

To know that on some midnight sea
Whence none could lift the pall
A drowning hand was waved to me,
Then — swept beyond recall.

THE OLD DEBATE

HIS angels fell, and myriads grope
In doubt, for this dark cause alone,—
That God hath given them room for hope,
And made their struggling wills their own.

In the same breath, they plead for chains
And freedom; pray for ordered spheres,
Then murmur that the sun retains
Its course, unchecked by smiles or tears.

"The Omnipotent would grant us this,
Or else He is not good," they say;
But O, the Power withholds their bliss
Till they agree what prayer to pray.

A SONG OF HOPE

NOT in those eyes, too kind for truth,
Which dare not note how beauties wane;
Nor in that crueller joy of youth
Which turns from sorrow with disdain;
No — no — not there,
Abides the hope that answers our despair.

Lie where they hid thy dead away.
Knock on that unrelenting door;
Then break, O desolate heart, and say
Farewell, farewell, for evermore . . .
There, only there,
Abides the hope that conquers all despair.

The silence that refused to bless
Till grief had turned the heart to stone . . .
What soul compact of nothingness
Could hear so fierce a trumpet blown?
Then hear, O hear,
The dreadful hope that equals all despair.

A SONG OF HOPE

There, till the deep atoning Might
  Shall answer all that each can pray,
The very boundlessness of night
  Proclaims — and waits — an equal day.
    There, only there,
— *But O, sing low, sweet strings, lest hope take*
    wing! —
  Abides the hope that answers all despair.

THE HEDGE-ROSE OPENS

HOW passionately it opens after rain,
And O, how like a prayer
To those great shining skies! Do they disdain
A bride so small and fair?
See the imploring petals, how they part
And utterly lay bare
The perishing treasures of that piteous heart
In wild surrender there.
What? Would'st *thou,* too, drink up the Eternal bliss,
Ecstatically dare,
O, little bride of God, to invoke *His* kiss? —
But O, how like a prayer!

THE MAY-TREE

THE May-tree on the hill
Stands in the night
So fragrant and so still,
So dusky white.

That, stealing from the wood
In that sweet air,
You'd think Diana stood
Before you there.

If it be so, her bloom
Trembles with bliss.
She waits across the gloom
Her shepherd's kiss.

Touch her. A bird will start
From those pure snows,—
The dark and fluttering heart
Endymion knows.

OLD LETTERS

READ them? Strangle that sick cry?
Christ God, no!
Shut the box. Lock the lid.
You'll be safer — so.
Could you read one crookéd word
Scrawled so long ago,
Love would rise before your face
And blind you, like a blow.

Close it! Quickly! For I caught,
In a childish hand,
Something that she never thought
I should understand.

So I crouch. And shall our God
Prove Him baser yet,
He who filled her eyes with light
Quite renounce His debt,

Give her worlds to love, and then —
Ere the sun be set,
Strike her down and coffin all?
Christ, shall *He* forget?

Close it! Quickly! For I caught,
In a childish hand,
Something that she never thought
I should understand.

LAMPS

IMMENSE and silent night,
Over the lonely downs I go;
And the deep gloom is pricked with points of light
Above me and below.

I cannot break the bars
Of Time and Fate; and if I scan the sky,
There comes to me, questioning those cold stars,
No signal, no reply.

Yet are they less than these —
These village-lights, which I do scan
Below me, or far out on darkling seas
Those messages from man?

Round me the darkness rolls.
Out of the depth, each lance of light
Shoots from lost lanthorns, thrills from living souls,
And shall I doubt the height?

No signal? No reply?
As through the deepening night I roam,
Hope opens all her casements in the sky
And lights the lamps of home.

AT EDEN GATES

TO *Eden Garden* — so the sign-post said;
I could not see the road;
But, where the Sussex clover blossomed red
Its runaway blisses flowed.

I traced them back for many a night and day,
— The way she, too, had gone! —
Till lo, the terrible Angel in the way
Inexorably shone.

Up to the Gates, a fearless fool I came;
Between the lily and rose
Fluttering these evil rags of sordid shame,
A thing to scare the crows.

"And hath the Master given thee, then, no word?"
The scornful Angel smiled:
Only two souls may pass my Flaming Sword,—
The Lover and the Child.

I raised my head,—"Now let all hell make
mirth,
Where Love went, I go, too!"
His eyes met mine. The sword sank to the
earth,
And let her lover through.

THE PSYCHE OF OUR DAY

AS constant lovers may rejoice
With seas between, with worlds between,
Because a fragrance and a voice
Are round them everywhere:
So let me travel to the grave,
Believing still — for I have seen —
That Love's triumphant banners wave
Beyond my own despair.

I have no trust in my own worth;
Yet have I faith, O love, for you,
That every beauty in bloom or leaf,
That even age and wrong
May touch, may hurt you, on this earth,
But only, only as kisses do;
Or as the fretted string of grief
Completes the bliss of song;

That you shall see, on any grave
  The snow fall, like that unseen hand
Which O, so often, pressed your hair
  To cherish and console:
That seas may roar and winds rave
  But you shall feel and understand
What vast caresses everywhere
  Convey you to the goal.

So was it always in the years
  When Love began, when Love began
With eyes that were not touched of tears
  And lips that still could sing —
And all around us, in the may,
  The child-god with his laughter ran,
And every bloom, on every spray,
  Betrayed his fluttering wing.

So hold it, keep it, count it, sweet,
  Until the end, until the end.
It is not cruelty, but bliss
  That pains and is so fond:

Crush life like thyme beneath your feet,
And O, my love, when that strange friend,
The Shadow of Wings, which men call Death
Shall close your eyes, with that last kiss,
Ask not His name. A rosier breath
Shall waken you — beyond.

PARACLETE

TONGUE hath not told it,
Heart hath not known;
Yet shall the bough swing
When it hath flown.

Dreams have denied it,
Fools forsworn:
Yet it hath comforted
Each man born.

Once and again it is
Blown to me,
Sweet from the wild thyme,
Salt from the sea;

Blown thro' the ferns
Faint from the sky;
Shadowed in water,
Yet clear as a cry.

PARACLETE

Light on a face,
  Or touch of a hand,
Making my still heart
  Understand.

Earth hath not seen it.
  Nor heaven above,
Yet shall the wild bough
  Bend with the Dove.

Yea, tho' the bloom fall
  Under Thy feet,
Veni, Creator,
  Paraclete!

AFTER RAIN

LISTEN! On sweetening air
The blackbird growing bold
Flings out, where green boughs glisten,
Three splashes of wild gold.

Daughter of April, hear;
And hear, O barefoot boy!
That carol of wild sweet water
Has washed the world with joy.

Glisten, O fragrant earth
Assoiled by heaven anew,
And O, ye lovers, listen,
With eyes that glisten, too.

THE DEATH OF A GREAT MAN

NO — not that he is dead. The pang's not there,
Nor in the City's many-coloured bloom
Of swift black-lettered posters, which the throng
Passes with bovine stare,
To say *He is dead* and *Is it going to rain?*
Or hum stray snatches of a rag-time song.
Nor is it in that falsest shibboleth
(Which orators toss to the dumb scorn of death)
That all the world stands weeping at his tomb.
London is dining, dancing, through it all.
And, in the unchecked smiles along the street
Where men, that slightly knew him, lightly meet,
With all the old indifferent grimaces,
There is no jot of grief, no tittle of pain.
No. No. For nearer things do most tears fall.
Grief is for near and little things. But pride,
O, pride was to be found by two or three,

And glory in his great battling memory,
  Prouder and purer than the loud world knows,
In one more dreadful sign, the day he died —
  The dreadful light upon a thousand faces,
The peace upon the faces of his foes.

THE ROMAN WAY

HE that has loyally served the State
Whereof he found himself a part,
Or spent his life-blood to create
A kingdom's treasure in his art;

Who sees the enemies of his land
Applauded, by her sects and schools;
And the high thought they scarce had scanned
Derided and befogged by fools;

— Better to know it soon than late! —
Struggling, he wins a meed of praise;
Achieving, he is dogged by hate
And furtive malice all his days.

O, Emperor of the Stoic clan,
Enfold him, then, with nobler pride.
Teach him that nought can hurt a man
Who will not turn or stoop to chide.

Can falsehood kindle or bedim
  One bay-leaf in his quiet crown?
Ten thousand Lies may pluck at him,
  But only Truth can tear him down.

Why should he heed the thing they say?
  They never asked if it were true.
Why brush one scribbler's tale away
  For others to invent a new?

No, let him search his heart, secure
  — If Truth be there — from tongue or pen;
And teach us, Emperor, to endure,
  To think like Romans and like men.

THE INNER PASSION

THERE is a Master in my heart
To whom, though oft against my will,
I bring the songs I sing apart
And strive to think that they fulfil
His silent law, within my heart.

But He is blind to my desires,
And deaf to all that I would plead:
He tests my truth at purer fires
And shames my purple with His need.
He claims my deeds, not my desires.

And often when my comrades praise,
I sadden, for He turns from me!
But, sometimes, when they blame, I raise
Mine eyes to His, and in them see
A tenderness too deep for praise.

THE INNER PASSION

He is not to be bought with gold,
  Or lured by thornless crowns of fame;
But when some rebel thought hath sold
  Him to dishonour and to shame,
And my heart's Pilate cries, "Behold,"

"Behold the Man," I know Him then;
  And all those wild thronged clamours die
In my heart's judgment hall again,
  Or if it ring with "Crucify!"
Some few are faithful even then.

Some few sad thoughts,— one bears His cross;
  To that dark Calvary of my pride;
One stands far off and mourns His loss,
  And one poor thief on either side
Hangs on his own unworthy cross.

And one — O, truth in ancient guise! —
  Rails, and one bids him cease alway,
And the God turns His hungering eyes
  On that poor thought with, "Thou, this day,
Shalt sing, shalt sing, in Paradise."

A COUNTRY LANE IN HEAVEN

THE exceeding weight of glory bowed
My head, in that pure clime:
I found a road that ran through cloud
Along the coasts of Time . . .

Out of that mist of years there came
A cross-barred gate of wood.
I clutched, I kissed the unheavenly frame
So hard, it trickled blood.

My head upon the iron lay.
I slobbered blood and foam.
Yea, like a dog, I knew the way,
A hundred yards from home.

Iron and blood and wood! They knew
The secret of that cry
When the Eternal Passion drew
Their Maker through — to die.

A COUNTRY LANE IN HEAVEN

I knew each little hawthorn-cloud
  Along my misty lane,
Then my heart burst. She sobbed aloud,
  Between my arms again.

TO THE DESTROYERS

YES. You have shattered many an ancient wrong,
And we were with you, heart and mind and soul,
But there are fools who cast away control
In life and thought and art; because the Strong —
We dare to say it — have now destroyed so long,
That careless minds forget the unchanging goal —
The nobler Order which shall make us whole,
The Service which is freedom, beauty, song.

We shall be stoned as traitors to your cause
While the real traitors that you did not know,
Chaos and Vice, trumpet themselves as free.
Pray God that, loyal to the Eternal laws,
A little remnant, mauled by friend and foe,
Save you through Truth, and bring you Liberty.

THE TRUMPET-CALL

I

TRUMPETER, sound the great recall!
Swift, O swift, for the squadrons break,
The long lines waver, mazed in the gloom!
Hither and thither the blind host blunders.
Stand thou firm for a dead Man's sake,
Firm where the ranks reel down to their doom,
Stand thou firm in the midst of the thunders,
Stand where the steeds and the riders fall,
Set the bronze to thy lips and sound
A rally to ring the whole world round.
Trumpeter, rally us, rally us, rally us!
Sound the great recall.

II

Trumpeter, sound for the ancient heights!
Clouds of the earth-born battle cloak
The heaven that our fathers held from of old;
And we — shall we prate to their sons of the gain
In gold or bread? Through yonder smoke
The heights that never were won with gold
Wait, still bright with their old red stain,
For the thousand chariots of God again,
And the steel that swept thro' a hundred fights
With the Ironsides, equal to life and death,
The steel, the steel of their ancient faith.
Trumpeter, rally us, rally us, rally us!
Sound for the sun-lit heights.

III

Trumpeter, sound for the faith again!
Blind and deaf with the dust and the blood,
Clashing together we know not whither
The tides of the battle would have us advance.

THE TRUMPET-CALL

Stand thou firm in the crimson flood,
Send the lightning of thy great cry
Through the thunders, athwart the storm,
Sound till the trumpets of God reply
From the heights we have lost in the stead-
fast sky,
From the Strength we despised and rejected.
Then,
Locking the ranks as they form and form,
Lift us forward, banner and lance,
Mailed in the faith of Cromwell's men,
When from their burning hearts they
hurled
The gage of heaven against the world!
Trumpeter, rally us, rally us, rally us,
Up to the heights again.

IV

Trumpeter, sound for the last Crusade!
Sound for the fire of the red-cross kings,
Sound for the passion, the splendour, the pity
That swept the world for a dead Man's
sake,

Sound, till the answering trumpet rings
Clear from the heights of the holy City,
Sound till the lions of England awake,
Sound for the tomb that our lives have betrayed;
O'er broken shrine and abandoned wall,
Trumpeter, sound the great recall,
Trumpeter, rally us, rally us, rally us;
Sound for the last Crusade!

V

Trumpeter, sound for the splendour of God!
Sound the music whose name is law,
Whose service is perfect freedom still,
The order august that rules the stars.
Bid the anarchs of night withdraw,
Too long the destroyers have worked their will,
Sound for the last, the last of the wars.
Sound for the heights that our fathers trod,
When truth was truth and love was love,
With a hell beneath, but a heaven above,
Trumpeter, rally us, up to the heights of it!
Sound for the City of God.

THE HEART OF CANADA

July 1912

BECAUSE her heart is all too proud
— *Canada! Canada! fair young Canada* —
To breathe the might of her love aloud,
Be quick, O Motherland!
Because her soul is wholly free
— *Canada kneels, thy daughter, Canada* —
England, look in her eyes and see,
Honour and understand.

Because her pride at thy masthead shines,
— *Canada! Canada!* — queenly Canada
Bows with all her breathing pines,
All her fragrant firs.
Because our isle is little and old
— *Canada! Canada!* — young-eyed Canada
Gives thee, Mother, her hands to hold,
And makes thy glory hers.

Because thy Fleet is hers for aye,
— *Canada! Canada!* — clear-souled Canada,
Ere the war-cloud roll this way,
Bids the world beware.
Her heart, her soul, her sword are thine
— *Thine the guns, the guns of Canada!* —
The ships are foaming into line,
And Canada will be there.

THE RETURN OF THE HOME-BORN

ALL along the white chalk coast
The mist lifts clear.
Wight is glimmering like a ghost.
The ship draws near.
Little inch-wide meadows
Lost so many a day,
The first time I knew you
Was when I turned away.

Island — little island —
Lost so many a year,
Mother of all I leave behind
— *Draw me near!* —
Mother of half the rolling world,
And O, so little and gray,
The first time I found you
Was when I turned away.

THE RETURN OF THE HOME-BORN

Over yon green water
Sussex lies.
But the slow mists gather
In our eyes.
England, little island
— God, how dear! —
Fold me in your mighty arms,
Draw me near.

Little tawny roofs of home,
Nestling in the gray,
Where the smell of Sussex loam
Blows across the bay . . .
Fold me, teach me, draw me close,
Lest in death I say
The first time I loved you
Was when I turned away.

A SALUTE FROM THE FLEET

I

The Guns of H.M.S. Royal Sovereign

OCEAN-MOTHER of England, thine is the crowning acclaim.
Here, in the morning of battle, from over the world and beyond,
Here, by our fleets of steel, silently foam into line
Fleets of our glorious dead, thy shadowy oak-walled ships.
Mother, for O, thy soul must speak thro' our iron lips!
How should we speak to the ages, unless with a word of thine?
Utter it, Victory! Let thy great signal flash thro' the flame!
Answer, *Bellerophon, Marlborough, Thunderer, Condor,* respond!

II

The Guns of H.M.S. Majestic

Out of the ages we speak unto you, O ye ages to be.
Rocks of Sevastopol, echo our thunder-word, bruit it afar.
Roll it, O Mediterranean, round by Gibraltar again.
Buffet it, Porto Bello, back to the Nile once more.
Answer it, great St. Vincent! Answer it, Elsinore,
Buffet it back from your crags and roll it over the main!
Heights of Quebec, O hear and re-echo it back to the Baltic Sea!
Answer it, *Camperdown!* Answer it, answer it, *Trafalgar!*

III

The Guns of H.M.S. Rainbow

How should we speak to the ages, if not with a word of thine,
Maker of cloud and harvest, foam and the sea-bird's wing,
Ocean-Mother of England and all things living and free?
Deep that wast moved by the Spirit to bloom with the first white morn,
Mother of Light and Freedom, mother of hopes unborn,
Speak, O world-wide welder of nations, O Soul of the sea!
Thine was the watchword that called us of old o'er the gray sky-line:
Lift thy stormy salute. It is freedom and peace that we bring.

IV

The Guns of H.M.S. Victory

Therefore on thee we call, O Mother, for we are thy sons.
Speak, with thy world-wide voice, O wake us anew from our sleep!
Speak, for the Light of the world still lives and grows on thy face.
Give us the ancient Word once more, the unchangeable Word,—
This that Nelson knew, this that Effingham heard,
This that resounds for ever in all the hearts of our race,
This that lives for a moment on the iron lips of our guns,
This — that echoes for ever and ever — the Word of the Deep.

V

The Guns of H.M.S. Dreadnought

How shall a king be saved by the multitude of an host?
Was not the answer thine, when fleet upon fleet swept, hurled
Blind thro' the dark North Sea, with all their invincible ships?
Thine was the answer, O mother of all men born to be free!
Witness again, Cape Wrath! — O thine, everlastingly,
Thine as Freedom arose and rolled thy song from her lips,
Thine when she 'stablished her throne in thy sight, on our rough rock-coast,
Thine with thy lustral glory and thunder, washing the world.

VI

The Guns of H.M.S. Temeraire

O for that ancient cry of the watch at the mid-
night bell,
Under the unknown stars, from the decks that
Frobisher trod.
Hark, *Before the world?* — he questions a
fleet in the dark!
Answer it, friend or foe! And, ringing from
mast to mast,
Mother, hast thou forgotten what cry in the dark
went past,
Answering still as he questioned? *Before*
the world? O, hark,
Ringing anear, *Before the world? . . . was*
God . . . All's well!
Dying afar . . . *Before the world?* . . .
All's well . . . *was God!*

VII

The Guns of H.M.S. Revenge

Raleigh and Grenville heard it, Knights of the Ocean-sea.
Have we forgotten it only, we with our leagues of steel?
Give us our watchword again, O mother, in this great hour!
Here, in the morning of battle, here as we gather our might,
Here, as the nations of earth in the light of thy freedom unite,
Shake our hearts with thy Word, O 'stablish our peace on thy power!
'Stablish our power on thy peace, thy glory, thy liberty,
'Stablish on thy deep Word the throne of our Commonweal.

VIII

The Guns of H.M.S. Leviathan

They that go down to the sea in ships — they heard it of old —
They shall behold His wonders, alone on the Deep, the Deep!
Have *we* forgotten, we only? O, rend the heavens again,
Voice of the Everlasting, shake the great hills with thy breath!
Roll the Voice of our God thro' the valleys of doubt and death!
Waken the fog-bound cities with the shout of the wind-swept main,
Inland over the smouldering plains, till the mists unfold,
Darkness die, and England, England arise from sleep.

IX

The Guns of H.M.S. Triumph

Queen of the North and the South, Queen of our ocean-renown,
England, England, England, O lift thine eyes to the sun!
Wake, for the hope of the whole world yearns to thee, watches and waits!
Now on the full flood-tide of the ages, the supreme hour
Beacons thee onward in might to the purpose and crown of thy power.
Hark, for the whole Atlantic thunders against thy gates,
Take the Crown of all Time, all might, earth's crowning Crown,
Throne thy children in peace and in freedom together, O weld them in one.

X

The Guns of the Fleet

Throne them in triumph together. Thine is the crowning cry!
Thine the glory for ever in the nation born of thy womb!
Thine the Sword and the Shield, and the shout that Salamis heard,
Surging in Æschylean splendour, earth-shaking acclaim!
Ocean-mother of England, thine is the throne of her fame.
Breaker of many fleets, O thine the victorious word,
Thine the Sun and the Freedom, the God and the wind-swept sky,
Thine the thunder and thine the lightning, thine the doom.

IN MEMORY OF A BRITISH AVIATOR

ON those young brows that knew no fear
We lay the Roman athlete's crown,
The laurel of the charioteer,
The imperial garland of renown,
While those young eyes, beyond the sun,
See Drake, see Raleigh, smile "Well done."

Their desert seas that knew no shore
To-night with fleets like cities flare;
But, frailer even than theirs of yore,
His keel a new-found deep would dare:
They watch, with thrice-experienced eyes
What fleets shall follow through the skies.

They would not scoff, though man should set
To feebler wings a mightier task.

They know what wonders wait us yet.
  Not all things in an hour they ask;
But in each noble failure see
The inevitable victory.

A thousand years have borne us far
  From that dark isle the Saxon swayed,
And star whispers to trembling star
  While Space and Time shrink back afraid,—
"Ten thousand thousand years remain
For man to dare our deep again."

Thou, too, shalt hear across that deep
  Our thundering fleets of thought draw nigh,
Round which the suns and systems sweep
  Like cloven foam from sky to sky,
Till Death himself at last restore
His captives to our eyes once more.

. . . . . .

Feeble the wings, dauntless the soul!
  Take thou the conqueror's laurel crown;
Take — for thy chariot grazed the goal —
  The imperial garland of renown;
While those young eyes, beyond the sun,
See Drake, see Raleigh, smile "Well done."

THE WAGGON

CRIMSON and black on the sky, a waggon of clover
Slowly goes rumbling, over the white chalk road;
And I lie in the golden grass there, wondering why
So little a thing
As the jingle and ring of the harness,
The hot creak of leather,
The peace of the plodding,
Should suddenly, stabbingly, make it
Strange that men die.

Only, perhaps, in the same blue summer weather,
Hundreds of years ago, in this field where I lie,
Cædmon, the Saxon, was caught by the self-same thing:

THE WAGGON

The serf lying, black with the sun, on his
beautiful wain-load,
The jingle and clink of the harness,
The hot creak of leather,
The peace of the plodding;
And wondered, O terribly wondered,
That men must die.

THE SACRED OAK

(*A Song of Britain*)

I

VOICE of the summer stars that, long ago,
Sang thro' the old oak-forests of our isle,
Enchanted voice, pure as her falling snow,
Dark as her storms, bright as her sunniest smile,
Taliessin, voice of Britain, the fierce flow
Of fourteen hundred years has whelmed not thee!
Still art thou singing, lavrock of her morn,
Singing to heaven in that first golden glow,
Singing above her mountains and her sea!
Not older yet are grown
Thy four winds in their moan
For Urien. Still thy charlock blooms in the billowing corn.

II

Thy dew is bright upon this beechen spray!
Spring wakes thy harp! I hear — I see —
again,
Thy wild steeds foaming thro' the crimson fray,
The raven on the white breast of thy slain,
The tumult of thy chariots, far away,
The weeping in the glens, the lustrous hair
Dishevelled over the stricken eagle's fall,
And in thy Druid groves, at fall of day
One gift that Britain gave her valorous there,
One gift of lordlier pride
Than aught — save to have died —
One spray of the sacred oak, they coveted
most of all.

III

I watch thy nested brambles growing green:
O strange, across that misty waste of years,
To glimpse the shadowy thrush that thou hast
seen,
To touch, across the ages, touch with tears
The ferns that hide thee with their fairy screen,
Or only hear them rustling in the dawn;

And — as a dreamer waking — in thy words,
For all the golden clouds that drowse between,
To feel the veil of centuries withdrawn,
To feel thy sun re-risen
Unbuild our shadowy prison
And hear on thy fresh boughs the carol of waking birds.

IV

O, happy voice, born in that far, clear time,
Over thy single harp thy simple strain
Attuned all life for Britain to the chime
Of viking oars and the sea's dark refrain,
And thine own beating heart, and the sublime
Measure to which the moons and stars revolve
Untroubled by the storms that, year by year,
In ever-swelling symphonies still climb
To embrace our growing world and to resolve
Discords unknown to thee,
In the infinite harmony
Which still transcends our strife and leaves us darkling here.

. . . . . .

V

For, now, one sings of heaven and one of hell,
One soars with hope, one plunges to despair!
This, trembling, doubts if aught be ill or well;
And that cries, " Fair is foul and foul is fair; "
And this cries, " Forward, though I cannot tell
Whither, and all too surely all things die; "
And that sighs, " Rest, then, sleep and take thine ease."
One sings his country and one rings its knell,
One hymns mankind, one dwarfs them with the sky.
O, Britain, let thy soul
Once more command the whole,
Once more command the strings of the world-wide harmony.

VI

For hark! One sings, *The gods, the gods are dead!*
Man triumphs! And hark — *Blind Space his funeral urn.*
And hark, one whispers with reverted head

To the old dead gods — *Bring back our heaven,*
return!
And hark, one moans — *The ancient order is fled,*
We are children of blind chance and vacant
dreams.
Heed not mine utterance — that was chance-
born, too.
And hark, the answer of Science — *All they said,*
Your fathers, in that old time, lit by gleams
Of what their hearts could feel,
The rolling years reveal
As fragments of one law, one covenant,
simply true.

VII

I find, she cries, *in all this march of time*
And space, no gulf, no break, nothing that mars
Its unity. I watch the primal slime
Lift Athens like a flower to greet the stars!
I flash my messages from clime to clime,
I link the increasing world from depth to height!
Not yet ye see the wonder that draws nigh,
When at some sudden contact, some sublime

Touch, as of memory, all this boundless night
Wherein ye grope entombed
Shall, by that touch illumed,
Like one electric City shine from sky to sky.

VIII

No longer then the memories that ye hold
Dark in your brain shall slumber. Ye shall see
That City whose gates are more than pearl or gold
And all its towers firm as Eternity.
The stones of the earth have cried to it from of old!
Why will ye turn from Him who reigns above
Because your highest words fall short?
Kneel — call
On Him whose Name — I AM — doth still enfold
Past, present, future, memory, hope and love.
No seed falls fruitless there.
Beyond your Father's care —
The old covenant still holds fast — no bird,
no leaf can fall.

IX

O Time, thou mask of the ever-living Soul,
Thou veil to shield us from that blinding Face,
Thou art wearing thin! We are nearer to the goal
When man no more shall need thy saving grace,
But all the folded years like one great scroll
Shall be unrolled in the omnipresent Now,
And He that saith *I am* unseal the tomb:
Nearer His thunders and His trumpets roll,
I catch the gleam that lit thy lifted brow,
O singer whose wild eyes
Possess these April skies,
I touch — I clasp thy hands thro' all the clouds of doom.

X

Teach thou our living choirs amid the sound
Of their tempestuous chords once more to hear
That harmony wherewith the whole is crowned,
The singing heavens that sphere by choral sphere

Break open, height o'er height, to the utmost
bound
Of passionate thought! O, as this glorious
land,
This sacred country shining on the sea,
Grows mightier, let not her clear voice be
drowned
In the fierce waves of faction. Let her stand
A beacon to the blind,
A signal to mankind,
A witness to the heavens' profoundest unity.

XI

Her altars are forgotten and her creeds
Dust, and her soul foregoes the lesser Cross.
O, point her to the greater! Her heart bleeds
Still, where men simply feel some vague deep
loss.
Their hands grope earthward, knowing not what
she needs.
We would not call her back in this great hour!
Nay, upward, onward, to the heights untrod
Signal us, living voices, by those deeds

Of all her deathless heroes, by the Power
That still, still walks her waves,
Still chastens her, still saves,
Signal us, not to the dead, but to the living God.

XII

Signal us with that watchword of the deep,
The watchword that her boldest seamen gave
The winds of the unknown ocean-sea to keep,
When round their oaken walls the midnight wave
Heaved and subsided in gigantic sleep,
And they plunged Westward with her flag unfurled.
Hark, o'er their cloudy sails and glimmering spars,
The watch cries, as they proudly onward sweep,—
Before the world . . . All's well! . . . Before the world . . .
From mast to calling mast
The counter-cry goes past—
Before the world was God!—it rings against the stars.

XIII

Signal us o'er the little heavens of gold
With that heroic signal Nelson knew
When, thro' the thunder and flame that round him rolled,
He pointed to the dream that still held true.
Cry o'er the warring nations, cry as of old
A little child shall lead them! they shall be
One people under the shadow of God's wing!
There shall be no more weeping! Let it be told
That Britain set one foot upon the sea,
One foot on the earth. Her eyes
Burned thro' the conquered skies,
And, as the angel of God, she bade the whole world sing.

XIV

A dream? Nay, have ye heard or have ye known
That the everlasting God who made the ends
Of all creation wearieth? His worlds groan
Together in travail still. Still He descends
From heaven. The increasing worlds are still His throne

And His creative Calvary and His tomb
Through which He sinks, dies, triumphs with each and all,
And ascends, multitudinous and at one
With all the hosts of His evolving doom,
His vast redeeming strife,
His everlasting life,
His love, beyond which not one bird, one leaf can fall.

XV

And hark, His whispers thro' creation flow,
Lovest thou me? His nations answer "yea!"
And — *Feed My lambs,* His voice as long ago
Steals from that highest heaven, how far away!
And yet again saith — *Lovest thou Me?* and "O,
Thou knowest we love Thee," passionately we cry:
But, heeding not our tumult, out of the deep
The great grave whisper, pitiful and low,
Breathes — *Feed My sheep;* and yet once more the sky

Thrills with that deep strange plea,
Lovest thou, lovest thou Me?
And our lips answer "yea"; but our God —
Feed My sheep.

XVI

O sink not yet beneath the exceeding weight
Of splendour, thou still single-hearted voice
Of Britain. Droop not earthward now to freight
Thy soul with fragments of the song, rejoice
In no faint flights of music that create
Low heavens o'er-arched by skies without a star,
Nor sink in the easier gulfs of shallower pain!
Sing thou in the whole majesty of thy fate,
Teach us thro' joy, thro' grief, thro' peace, thro' war,
With single heart and soul
Still, still to seek the goal,
And thro' our perishing heavens, point us to
Heaven again.

XVII

Voice of the summer stars that long ago
Sang thro' the old oak-forests of our isle,
An ocean-music that thou ne'er couldst know

Storms Heaven — O, keep us steadfast all the
while;
Not idly swayed by tides that ebb and flow,
But strong to embrace the whole vast symphony
Wherein no note (no bird, no leaf) can fall
Beyond His care, to enfold it all as though
Thy single harp were ours, its unity
In battle like one sword,
And O, its one reward
One spray of the sacred oak, still coveted
most of all.

THE WORLD'S WEDDING

"Et quid curae nobis de generibus et speciebus? Ex uno Verbo omnia, et unum loquuntur omnia. Cui omnia unum sunt, quique ad unum omnia trahit et omnia in uno videt, potest stabilis corde esse."— THOMAS À KEMPIS.

I

WHEN poppies fired the nut-brown wheat,
My love went by with sun-stained feet:
I followed her laughter, followed her, followed her, all a summer's morn!
But O, from an elfin palace of air,
A wild bird sang a song so rare,
I stayed to listen and — lost my Fair,
And walked the world forlorn.

II

When chalk shone white between the sheaves,
My love went by as one that grieves;
I followed her weeping, followed her, followed her, all an autumn noon!

The sunset flamed so fierce a red
From North to South — I turned my head
To wonder — and my Fair was fled
Beyond the dawning moon.

III

When bare black boughs were choked with snow,
My love went by, as long ago;
I followed her dreaming, followed her, followed her, all a winter's night!
But O, along that snow-white track
With thorny shadows printed black,
I saw three kings come riding back,
And — lost my life's delight.

IV

They are so many, and she but One;
And I and she, like moon and sun
So separate ever! Ah yet, I follow her, follow her, faint and far;

For what if all this diverse bliss
Should run together in one kiss!
Swift, Spring, with the sweet clue I miss
Between these several instances,—
The kings, that inn, that star.

V

Between the hawk's and the wood-dove's wing,
My love, my love flashed by like Spring!
The year had finished its golden ring!
Earth, the Gipsy, and Heaven, the King,
Were married like notes in the song I sing,
And O, I followed her, followed her, followed her over the hills of Time,
Never to lose her now I know,
For whom the sun was clasped in snow,
The heights linked to the depths below,
The rose's flush to the planet's glow,
Death the friend to life the foe,
The Winter's joy to the Spring's woe,
And the world made one in a rhyme.

IN MEMORIAM
SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

FAREWELL! The soft mists of the sunset-sky
Slowly enfold his fading birch-canoe!
Farewell! His dark, his desolate forests cry,
Moved to their vast, their sorrowful depths anew.

Fading! Nay, lifted thro' a heaven of light,
His proud sails brightening thro' that crimson flame,
Leaving us lonely on the shores of night,
Home to Ponemah take his deathless fame.

Generous as a child, so wholly free
From all base pride that fools forgot his crown,
He adored Beauty, in pure ecstasy,
And waived the mere rewards of his renown.

The spark that falls from heaven not oft on earth
To human hearts this vital splendour gives;
His was the simple, true, immortal birth.
Scholars compose; but — *this man's music lives!*

Greater than England or than Earth discerned,
He never paltered with his art for gain:
When many a vaunted crown to dust is turned,
This uncrowned king shall take his throne and reign.

Nations unborn shall hear his forests moan;
Ages unscanned shall hear his winds lament,
Hear the strange grief that deepened through his own
The vast cry of a buried continent.

Through him, his race a moment lifted up
Forests of hands to Beauty as in prayer;
Touched through his lips the sacramental Cup,
And then sank back — benumbed in our bleak air.

Through him, through him, a lost world hailed
the light!
The tragedy of that triumph none can tell,—
So great, so brief, so quickly snatched from sight;
And yet — O hail, great comrade, not farewell!

. . . . . .

INSCRIPTION

(*For the Grave of Coleridge-Taylor*)

SLEEP, crowned with fame; fearless of change or time.
Sleep, like remembered music in the soul,
Silent, immortal; while our discords climb
To that great chord which shall resolve the whole.

Silent with Mozart on that solemn shore;
Secure where neither waves nor hearts can break;
Sleep — till the Master of the World, once more,
Touch the remembered strings, and bid thee wake . . .

Touch the remembered strings, and bid thee wake.

VALUES

THE moon that sways the rhythmic seas,
The wheeling earth, the marching sky,—
I ask not whence the order came
That moves them all as one.

These are your chariots. Nor shall these
Appal me with immensity;
I know they carry one heart of flame
More precious than the sun.

THE HEROIC DEAD

(*On the loss of the Titanic*)

IF in the noon they doubted, in the night
They never swerved. Death had no power to appal.
There was one Way, one Truth, one Life, one Light,
One Love that shone triumphant over all.

If in the noon they doubted, at the last
There was no Way to part, no Way but One
That rolled the waves of Nature back and cast
In ancient days a shadow across the sun.

If in the noon they doubted, their last breath
Saluted once again the eternal goal,
Chanted a love-song in the face of Death
And rent the veil of darkness from the soul.

If in the noon they doubted, in the night
They waved the shadowy world of strife aside,
Flooded high heaven with an immortal light,
And taught the deep how its Creator died.

THE CRY IN THE NIGHT

IT tears at the heart in the night, that moan
of the wind,
That desolate moan.
It is worse than the cry of a child. I can hardly
bear
To hear it, alone.

It is worse than the sobbing of love, when love
is estranged:
For this is a cry
Out of the desolate ages. It never has changed.
It never can die.

A cry over numberless graves, dark, helpless and
blind,
From the measureless past,
To the measureless future, a sobbing before the
first laughter,
And after the last!

. . . . . .

THE CRY IN THE NIGHT

From the height of creation, in passion eternal, the Word
Rushes forth, the loud cry,
Forsaken! Forsaken! It cuts through the night like a sword!
Shall it win no reply?

Not of earth is that height of all sorrow, past time, out of space,
Therefore here, here and now,
Universal, a Calvary, crowned with Thy passionate face,
Thy thorn-wounded brow.

Ah, could I shrink if Thy heart for each heart upon earth
Must break like a sea?
Could I hear, could I bear it at all, if I were not a part
Of this labour in Thee?

Shall I accuse Thee, then? God, I account it my own
All the grief I can bear,

On Thy Cross of Creation, to balance earth's bliss and atone,
Atone for life there.

If this be the One Way for ever, which not Thine all-might
Could change, if it would,
Till the truth be untrue, till the dark be the same as the light,
And till evil be good,

Shall I who took part in Thine April, shrink now from my part
In Thine anguish to be?
If Thy goal be the One goal of all, shall not even man's heart
Endure this, with Thee;

Die with Thee, balancing life, or help Thee to pay
For our hope with our pain? . . .
O, the voice of the wind in the night! Is it day, then, broad day,
On the blind earth again?

ASTRID

(*An Experiment in Initial Rhymes*)

WHITE-armed Astrid,— ah, but she was beautiful! —
Nightly wandered weeping thro' the ferns in the moon,
Slowly, weaving her strange garland in the forest,
Crowned with white violets,
Gowned in green.
Holy was that glen where she glided,
Making her wild garland as Merlin had bidden her,
Breaking off the milk-white horns of the honeysuckle,
Sweetly dripped the dew upon her small white Feet.

White-throated Astrid,— ah, but she was beautiful! —
Nightly sought the answer to that riddle in the moon.

She must weave her garland, ere she save her soul.
Three long years she has wandered there in vain.
Always, always, the blossom that would finish it
Falls to her feet, and the garland breaks and vanishes,
Breaks like a dream in the dawn when the dreamer
Wakes.

White-bosomed Astrid,— ah, but she was beautiful! —
Nightly tastes the sorrow of the world in the moon.
Will it be this little white miracle, she wonders.
How shall she know it, the star that will save her?
Still, ah still, in the moonlight she crouches
Bowing her head, for the garland has crumbled!
All the wild petals for the thousand and second time
Fall.

White-footed Astrid,— ah, but she is beautiful! —
Nightly seeks the secret of the world in the moon.
She will find the secret. She will find the golden
Key to the riddle, on the night when she has numbered them,
Marshalled all her wild flowers, ordered them as music,
Star by star, note by note, changing them and ranging them,
Suddenly, as at a kiss, all will flash together,
Flooding like the dawn thro' the arches of the woodland,
Fern and thyme and violet, maiden-hair and primrose
Turn to the Rose of the World, and He shall fold her,
Kiss her on the mouth, saying, all the world is one now,
This is the secret of the music that the soul hears,—
This.

THE INIMITABLE LOVERS

THEY tell this proud tale of the Queen — Cleopatra,
Subtlest of women that the world has ever seen,
How that, on the night when she parted with her lover
Anthony, tearless, dry-throated, and sick-hearted,
A strange thing befell them in the darkness where they stood.

Bitter as blood was that darkness.
And they stood in a deep window, looking to the west.
Her white breast was brighter than the moon upon the sea,
And it moved in her agony (because it was the end!)
Like a deep sea, where many had been drowned.

Proud ships that were crowned with an Emperor's eagles
Were sunken there forgotten, with their emeralds and gold.
They had drunken of that glory, and their tale was told, utterly,
Told.

There, as they parted, heart from heart, mouth from mouth,
They stared upon each other. They listened. For the South-wind
Brought them a rumour from afar; and she said,
Lifting her head, too beautiful for anguish,
Too proud for pity,—
It is the gods that leave the City! O, Anthony,
Anthony, the gods have forsaken us;
Because it is the end! They leave us to our doom.
Hear it! And unshaken in the darkness,
Dull as dropping earth upon a tomb in the distance,
They heard, as when across a wood a low wind comes,

A muttering of drums, drawing nearer,
Then louder and clearer, as when a trumpet sings
To battle, it came rushing on the wings of the wind,
A sound of sacked cities, a sound of lamentation,
A cry of desolation, as when a conquered nation
Is weeping in the darkness, because its tale is told;
And then — a sound of chariots that rolled thro' that sorrow
Trampled like a storm of wild stallions, tossing nearer,
Trampled louder, clearer, triumphantly as music,
Till lo! in that great darkness, along that vacant street,
A red light beat like a furnace on the walls,
Then — like the blast when the North-wind calls to battle,
Blaring thro' the blood-red tumult and the flame,
Shaking the proud City as they came, an hundred elephants,

Cream-white and bronze, and splashed with bitter
crimson,
Trumpeting for battle as they trod, an hundred
elephants,
Bronze and cream-white, and trapped with gold
and purple,
Towered like tuskéd castles, every thunder-
laden footfall
Dreadful as the shattering of a City. Yet they trod,
Rocking like an earthquake, to a great tri-
umphant music,
And, swinging like the stars, black planets, white
moons,
Thro' the stream of the torches, they brought
the red chariot,
The chariot of the battle-god — Mars.
While the tall spears of Sparta tossed clashing
in his train,
And a host of ghostly warriors cried aloud
All hail! to those twain, and went rushing to
the darkness
Like a pageantry of cloud, for their tale was told
— utterly —
Told.

And following, in the fury of the vine, rushing down
Like a many-visaged torrent, with ivy-rod and thyrse,
And many a wild and foaming crown of roses,
Crowded the Bacchanals, the brown-limbed shepherds,
The red-tongued leopards, and the glory of the god!
Iacchus! Iacchus! without dance, without song,
They cried and swept along to the darkness.
Only for a breath when the tumult of their torches
Crimsoned the deep window where that dark warrior stood
With the blood upon his mail, and the Queen — Cleopatra,
Frozen to white marble — the Mænads raised their timbrels,
Tossed their white arms, with a clash — *All hail!*
Like wild swimmers, pale, in a sea of blood and wine,

All hail! All hail! Then they swept into the darkness
And the darkness buried them. Their tale was told — utterly —
Told.

And following them, O softer than the moon upon the sea,
Aphrodite, implacably, shone.
Like a furnace of white roses, Aphrodite and her train
Lifted their white arms to those twain in the silence
Once, and were gone into the darkness;
Once, and away into the darkness they were swept
Like a pageantry of cloud, without praise, without pity.
Then the dark City slept. And the Queen
— Cleopatra —
Subtlest of women that this earth has ever seen,
Turning to her lover in the darkness where he stood,

With the blood upon his mail,
Bowing her head upon that iron in the darkness,
Wept.

THE CRAGS

(*In memory of Thomas Bailey Aldrich*)

FALERNIAN, first! What other wine
Should brim the cup or tint the line
That would recall my days
Among your creeks and bays;

Where, founded on a rock, your house
Between the pines' unfading boughs
Watches through sun and rain
That lonelier coast of Maine;

And the Atlantic's mounded blue
Breaks on your crags the summer through,
A long pine's length below,
In rainbow-tossing snow.

While on your railed verandah there
As on a deck you sail through air,
And sea and cloud and sky
Go softly streaming by.

Like delicate oils at set of sun
Smoothing the waves the colours run —
  Around the enchanted hull,
  Anchored and beautiful,—

Restoring to that sun-dried star
You brought from coral isles afar —
  With shells that mock the moon —
  The tints of their lagoon;

Till, from within, your lamps declare
Your harbours by the colours there,
  An Indian god, a fan
  Painted in Old Japan.

But, best of all, I think at night,
The moon that makes a road of light
  Across the whispering sea,
  A road — for memory.

When the blue dusk has filled the pane,
And the great pine-logs burn again,
  And books are good to read.
  — For his were books indeed.—

Their silken shadows, rustling, dim,
May sing no more of Spain for him;
No shadows of old France
Renew their courtly dance.

He walks no more where shadows are
But left their ivory gates ajar,
That shadows might prolong
The dance, the tale, the song.

His was no narrow test or rule.
He chose the best of every school,—
Stendhal and Keats and Donne,
Balzac and Stevenson;

Wordsworth and Flaubert filled their place.
Dumas met Hawthorne face to face.
There were both new and old
In his good realm of gold.

The title-pages bore his name;
And, nightly, by the dancing flame,
Following him, I found
That all was haunted ground;

Until a friendlier shadow fell
Upon the leaves he loved so well,
And I no longer read,
But talked with him instead.

THE GHOST OF SHAKESPEARE

1914

CRIMSON was the twilight, under that crab-tree,
Where — old tales tell us — all a midsummer's night,
A mad young poacher, drunk with mead of elfin-land,
Lodged with the fern-owl, and looked at the stars.

There, from the dusk where the dream of Piers Plowman
Darkens on the sunset, to this dusk of our own,
I read, in a history, the record of our world.

The hawk-moth, the currant-moth, the red-striped tiger-moth
Shimmered all around me, so white shone those pages;
And, in among the blue boughs, the bats flew low.

I slumbered, the history slipped from my hand.
Then I saw a dead man, dreadful in the moon-
dawn,
The ghost of the master, bowed upon that book.
He muttered as he searched it,— *what vast con-
vulsion*
*Mocks my sexton's curse now, shakes our English
clay?*
Whereupon I told him, and asked him in turn
Whether he espied any light in those pages
Which painted an epoch later than his own.
I am a shadow, he said, *and I see none . . .*

I am a shadow, he said, *and I see none.*

Then, O then he murmured to himself (while the
moon hung
Crimson as a lanthorn of Cathay in that crab-
tree),
Laughing at his work and the world, as I thought,
Yet with some bitterness, yet with some beauty,
Mocking his own music, these wraiths of his
rhymes:

THE GHOST OF SHAKESPEARE

I

God, when I turn the leaves of that dark book
  Wherein our wisest teach us to recall
Those glorious flags which in old tempests shook
  And those proud thrones which held my youth
    in thrall;

When I see clear what seemed to childish eyes
  The gorgeous colouring of each pictured age;
And for their dominant tints now recognise
  Those prints of innocent blood on every page;

O, then I know this world is fast asleep,
  Bound in Time's womb, till some far morn-
    ing break;
And, though light grows upon the dreadful deep,
  We are dungeoned in thick night. We are not
    awake.

The world's unborn, for all our hopes and
    schemes;
And all its myriads only move in dreams.

II

Read what our wisest chroniclers record: —
A king betrayed both foes and friends to death,
Delivered his own country to the sword,
And lied, and lied, and lied to his last breath.

He died, the martyred anarch of his time.
What balm is this that consecrates his dust?
The self-same history shudders at the "crime"
Which shed a blood so fragrant, so "august."

Yes. Let our sons by thousands, millions, die;
And when the crowned assassin of to-day
Stands in the Judgment Hall of Liberty
What shall your desolate nations rise and say?

Honour the dog. He's vanquished! He's a king!
So — for our dead — he's too "august" a thing.

III

It was a crimson twilight, under that crab-tree.
Moths beat about me, and bats flew low.
I read, in a history, the record of our world.

THE GHOST OF SHAKESPEARE

If there be light, said the Master,
I am a shadow, and I see none . . .
I am a shadow, and I see none.

THE WHITE CLIFFS

WODEN made the red cliffs, the red walls of England.
Round the South of Devonshire, they burn against the blue.
Green is the water there; and, clear as liquid sunlight,
Blue-green as mackerel, the bays that Raleigh knew.

Thor made the black cliffs, the battlements of England,
Climbing to Tintagel where the white gulls wheel.
Cold are the caverns there, and sullen as a cannon-mouth,
Booming back the grey swell that gleams like steel.

THE WHITE CLIFFS

Balder made the white cliffs, the white shield of England
(Crowned with thyme and violet where Sussex wheatears fly),
White as the White Ensign are the bouldered heights of Dover,
Beautiful the scutcheon that they bare against the sky.

So the world shall sing of them — the white cliffs of England,
White, the glory of her sails, the banner of her pride.
One and all,— their seamen met and broke the dread Armada.
Only white may show the world the shield for which they died.

ON THE SOUTH COAST

COME away into the sun and see
All the heavens that used to be,
Daily, hourly, brought to birth
Out of the deep remembering earth.

This is England, this is the land
That holds my heart in her sweet hand.
This is she whose turf, I pray,
Will hide me, on her breast, one day.

Cast you down on the close-cropped turf,
See how the white cliff spreads the surf,
On green-eyed seas that glitter and trail
Into the south like a peacock's tail.

Then, come away over the hills of thyme,
Where folds like elfin belfries chime
Till Eve, in a cloud of her dusky hair,
Makes it Elf-land everywhere.

ON THE SOUTH COAST

You shall pity the king on his throne.
You shall know what never was known.
All the glory of all the skies
Utterly yours in your true love's eyes;

All the bloom to the world's end
And all the heavens that over it bend,
Compacted in one garden white,
The garden of your love's delight.

This is England, this is the land
That holds my soul in her sweet hand.
This is she whose turf, I pray,
Will hide me on her heart one day.

OLDER THAN THE HILLS

OLDER than the hills, older than the sea,
Older than the heart of the Spring,
O, what is this that breaks
From the blind shell, wakes,
Wakes, and is gone like a wing?

Older than the sea, older than the moon,
Older than the heart of the May,
What is this blind refrain
Of a song that shall remain
When the singer is long gone away?

Older than the moon, older than the stars,
Older than the wind in the night,—
Though the young dews are sweet
On the heather at our feet
And the blue hills laughing back the light,—

Till the stars grow young, till the hills grow young,
O, Love, we shall walk through Time,
Till we round the world at last,
And the future be the past,
And the winds of Eden greet us from the prime.

THE TORCH

(*Sussex Landscape*)

IS it your watch-fire, elves, where the down with its darkening shoulder
Lifts on the death of the sun, out of the valley of thyme?
Dropt on the broad chalk path and, cresting the ridge of it, smoulder
Crimson as blood on the white, halting my feet as they climb,

Clusters of clover-bloom, spilled from what negligent arms in the tender
Dusk of the great grey world, last of the tints of the day;
Beautiful, sorrowful, strange last stain of that perishing splendour.
Elves, from what torn white feet trickled that red on the way?

No — from the sun-burnt hands of what lovers
that fade in the distance?
Here, was it here that they paused, here that
the legend was told?
Even a kiss would be heard in this hush; but, with
mocking insistence,
Now thro' the valley resound — only the bells
of the fold.

Dropt — from the hands of what beautiful
throng? Did they cry *"follow after"?*
Dancing into the west, leaving this token for
me,
Memory dead on the path, and the sunset to bury
their laughter?
Youth — is it youth that has flown? Dark-
ness covers the sea.

THE TORCH

Darkness covers the earth; but the path is here!
I assay it.
Let the bloom fall like a flake — dropt from
the torch of a friend!
Beautiful revellers, happy companions, I see and
obey it;
Follow your torch in the night, follow your path
to the end.

THE OUTLAW

DEEP in the greenwood of my heart
My wild hounds race.
I cloak my soul at feast and mart,
I mask my face;

Outlawed, but not alone, for Truth
Is outlawed, too.
Proud world, you cannot banish us.
We banish *you.*

Go by, go by, with all your din,
Your dust, your greed, your guile,
Your gold, your thrones can never win —
From Her — one smile.

She sings to me in a lonely place,
She takes my hand.
I look into her lovely face
And understand. . . .

THE OUTLAW

Outlawed, but not alone, for Love
  Is outlawed, too.
You cannot banish us, proud world.
  We banish *you.*

Now which is outlawed, which alone?
  Around us fall and rise
Murmurs of leaf and fern, the moan
  Of Paradise.

Outlawed? Then hills and woods and streams
  Are outlawed, too!
Proud world, from our immortal dreams,
  We banish you.

THE YOUNG FRIAR

WHEN leaves broke out on the wild briar,
And bells for matins rung,
Sorrow came to the old friar
— Hundreds of years ago it was! —
And May came to the young.

The old was ripening for the sky,
The young was twenty-four.
The Franklin's daughter passed him by,
Reading a painted missal-book,
Beside the chapel door.

With brown cassock and sandalled feet,
And red Spring wine for blood;
The very next noon he chanced to meet
The Franklin's daughter, in a green May twilight,
Walking through the wood.

Pax vobiscum — to a maid
The crosiered ferns among!
But hers was only the Saxon,
And his the Norman tongue;
And the Latin taught by the old friar
Made music for the young.

And never a better deed was done
By Mother Church below
Than when she made old England one,
— Hundreds of years ago it was! —
Hundreds of years ago.

Rich was the painted page they read
Before that sunset died;
Nut-brown hood by golden head,
Murmuring *Rosa Mystica,*
While nesting thrushes cried.

A Saxon maid with flaxen hair,
And eyes of Sussex grey;
A young monk out of Normandy: —
"May is our Lady's month," he said,
"And O, my love, my May!"

Then over the fallen missal-book
  The missel-thrushes sung
Till — *Domus Aurea* — rose the moon
  And bells for vespers rung.
It was gold and blue for the old friar,
  But hawthorn for the young.

For gown of green and brown hood,
  Before that curfew tolled,
Had flown for ever through the wood
  — Hundreds of years ago it was! —
But twenty summers old.

And empty stood his chapel stall,
  Empty his thin grey cell,
Empty her seat in the Franklin's hall;
  And there were swords that searched for them
Before the matin bell.

And, crowders tell, a sword that night
  Wrought them an evil turn,
And that the may was not more white
  Than those white bones the robin found
Among the roots of fern.

But others tell of stranger things
  Half-heard on Whitsun eves,
Of sweet and ghostly whisperings —
  Though hundreds of years ago it was —
Among the ghostly leaves: —

Sero te amavi —
  Grey eyes of sun-lit dew! —
Tam antiqua, Tam nova —
  Augustine heard it, too.
Late have I loved that May, Lady,
  So ancient, and so new!

And no man knows where they were flown,
  For the wind takes the may:
But white and fresh the may was blown
  — Though hundreds of years ago it was —
As this that blooms to-day.

And the leaves break out on the wild briar,
  And bells must still be rung;
But sorrow comes to the old friar,
  For he remembers a May, a May,
When his old heart was young.

A FOREST SONG

WHO would be a king
That can sit in the sun and sing?
Nay, I have a kingdom of mine own.
A fallen oak-tree is my throne.
Then, pluck the strings, and tell me true
If Cæsar in his glory knew
The worlds he lost in sun and dew.

Who would be a queen
That sees what my love hath seen? —
The blood of little children shed
To make one royal ruby red!
Then, tell me, music, why the great
For quarrelling trumpets abdicate
This quick, this absolute estate.

Nay, who would sing in heaven,
Among the choral Seven
That hears — as Love and I have heard,
The whole sky listening to one bird?
And where's the ruby, tell me where,
Whose crimsons for one breath compare
With this wild rose that all may share?

THE TRUMPET OF THE LAW

(*Phi Beta Kappa Poem, Harvard,* 1915)

MUSIC is dead. An age, an age is dying.
Shreds of Uranian song, wild symphonies
Tortured with moans of butchered innocents,
Blow past us on the wind. Chaos resumes
His kingdom. All the visions of the world,
The visions that were music, being shaped
By law, moving in measure, treading the road
That suns and systems tread, O who can hear
Their music now? Urania bows her head.
Only the feet that move in order dance.
Only the mind attuned to that dread pulse
Of law throughout the universe can sing.
Only the soul that plays its rhythmic part
In that great measure of the tides and suns
Terrestrial and celestial, till it soar
Into the supreme melodies of heaven,
Only that soul, climbing the splendid road

Of law from height to height, may walk with God,
Shape its own sphere from chaos, conquer death,
Lay hold on life and liberty, and sing.

Yet, since, at least, the fleshly heart must beat
In measure, and no new rebellion breaks
That old restriction, murmurs reach it still,
Rumours of that vast music which resolves
Our discords, and to this, to this attuned,
Though blindly, it responds, in notes like these:

There was a song in heaven of old,
  A song the choral seven began,
When God with all his chariots rolled
  The tides of chaos back for man;
When suns revolved and planets wheeled,
  And the great oceans ebbed and flowed,
There is one way of life, it pealed,
  The road of law, the unchanging road.

The trumpet of the law resounds,
  And we behold, from depth to height,
What glittering sentries walk their rounds,
  What ordered hosts patrol the night,

While wheeling worlds proclaim to us,
Captained by Thee thro' nights unknown,—
Glory that would be glorious
Must keep Thy law to find its own.

Beyond rebellion, past caprice,
From heavens that comprehend all change,
All space, all time, till time shall cease,
The trumpet rings to souls that range,
To souls that in wild dreams annul
Thy word, confessed by wood and stone,—
Beauty that would be beautiful
Must keep Thy law to find its own.

He that can shake it, will he thrust
His careless hands into the fire?
He that would break it, shall we trust
The sun to rise at his desire?
Constant above our discontent,
The trumpet peals in sterner tone,—
Might that would be omnipotent
Must keep Thy law to find its own.

Ah, though beneath unpitying spheres
Unreckoned seems our human cry,

THE TRUMPET OF THE LAW

In Thy deep law, beyond the years,
  Abides the Eternal memory.
Thy law is light, to eyes grown dull
  Dreaming of worlds like bubbles blown;
And Mercy that is merciful
  Shall keep Thy law and find its own.

Unchanging God, by that one Light
  Through which we grope to Truth and Thee,
Confound not yet our day with night,
  Break not the measures of Thy sea.
Hear not, though grief for chaos cry
  Or rail at Thine unanswering throne.
Thy law, Thy law, is liberty,
  And in Thy law we find our own.

So, to Uranian music, rose our world.
The boughs put forth, the young leaves groped for
  light.
The wild flower spread its petals as in prayer.
Then, for terrestrial ears, vast discords rose,
The struggle in the jungle, clashing themes

That strove for mastery; but above them all,
Ever the mightier measure of the suns
Resolved them into broader harmonies,
That fought again for mastery. The night
Buried the mastodon. The warring tribes
Of men were merged in nations. Wider laws
Embraced them. Man no longer fought with man,
Though nation warred with nation. Hatred fell
Before the gaze of love. For in an hour
When, by the law of might, mankind could rise
No higher, into the deepening music stole
A loftier theme, a law that gathered all
The laws of earth into its broadening breast
And moved like one full river to the sea,
The law of Love.
The sun stood dark at noon;
Dark as the moon before this mightier Power,
And a Voice rang across the blood-stained earth:
I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light.
We heard it, and we did not hear. In dreams
We caught a thousand fragments of the strain,
But never wholly heard it. We moved on
Obeying it a little, till our world

Became so vast, that we could only hear
Stray notes, a golden phrase, a sorrowful cry,
Never the rounded glory of the whole.
So one would sing of death, one of despair,
And some, knowing that God was more than man,
Knowing that the Eternal Power behind
Our universe was more than man, would shrink
From crowning Him with human attributes,
Though these remained the highest that we knew;
And therefore, falling back on lower signs,
Bereft of love, thought, personality,
They made Him less than man; made Him a blind
Unweeting force, less than the best in man,
Less than the best that He Himself had made.

Yet, though from earth we could no longer hear
As from a central throne, the harmonies
Of the revolving whole; yet though from earth,
And from earth's Calvary, the central scene
Withdrew to dreadful depths beyond our ken;
Withdrew to some deep Calvary at the heart
Of all creation; yet, O yet, we heard,
Echoes that murmured from Eternity,

I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light.
And still the eternal passion undiscerned
Moved like a purple shadow through our world,
While we, in intellectual chaos, raised
The ancient cry, *Not this man, but Barabbas.*
Then Might grew Right once more, for who could
hold
The Right, when the rebellious hearts of men
Finding the Law too hard in life, thought, art,
Proclaimed that Right itself was born of chance,
Born out of nothingness and doomed, at last,
To nothingness; while all that men have held
Better than dust — love, honour, justice, truth —
Was less than dust, for the blind dust endures?
But love, they said, and the proud soul of man,
Die with the breath, before the flesh decays.
And still, amidst the chaos, Love was born,
Suffered and died; and in a myriad forms
A myriad parables of the Eternal Christ
Unfolded their deep message to mankind.
So, on this last wild winter of his birth,
Though cannon rocked his cradle, heaven might
hear,
Once more, the Mother and her infant Child.

Will the Five Clock-Towers chime tonight?
— Child, the red earth would shake with scorn.—
But will the Emperors laugh outright
If Roland rings that Christ is born?

No belfries pealed for that pure birth.
There were no high-stalled choirs to sing.
The blood of children smoked on earth;
For Herod, in those days, was king.—

O, then the Mother and her Son
Were refugees that Christmas, too? —
Through all the ages, little one,
That strange old story still comes true.—

Was there no peace in Bethlehem? —
Yes. There was Love in one poor Inn;
And, while His wings were over them,
They heard those deeper songs begin.—

What songs were they? What songs were they?
Did stars of shrapnel shed their light? —

O, little child, I have lost the way.
I cannot find that Inn tonight.—

Is there no peace, then, anywhere? —
Perhaps, where some poor soldier lies
With all his wounds in front, out there.—
You weep? — He had your innocent eyes.—

Then is it true that Christ's a slave,
Whom all these wrongs can never rouse? —
They said it. But His anger drave
The money-changers from His House.—

Yet He forgave and turned away.—
Yes, unto seventy times and seven.
But they forget. He comes one day
In power, among the clouds of heaven.—

Then Roland rings? — Yes, little son!
With iron hammers they dare not scorn,
Roland is breaking them, gun by gun,
Roland is ringing. Christ is born.

Born and re-born; for though the Christ we knew
On earth be dead for ever, who shall kill

THE TRUMPET OF THE LAW

The Eternal Christ whose law is in our hearts,
Christ, who in this dark hour descends to hell,
And ascends into heaven, and sits beside
The right hand of the Father. If for men
This law be dead, it lives for children still.
Children that men have butchered see His face,
Rest in His arms, and strike our mockery dumb.
So shall the trumpet of the law resound
Through all the ages, telling of that child
Whose outstretched arms in Belgium speak for
God.

They crucified a Man of old,
The thorns are shrivelled on His brow.
Prophet or fool or God, behold,
They crucify Thy children now.
They doubted evil, doubted good,
And the eternal heavens as well,
Behold, the iron and the blood,
The visible handiwork of Hell.

Fast to the cross they found it there,
They found it in the village street,
A naked child, with sunkissed hair.

The nails were through its hands and feet.
For Christ was dead, yes, Christ was dead!
O Lamb of God, O little one,
I kneel before your cross instead
And the same shadow veils the sun. . . .

And the same shadow veils the sun. . . .

But you, O land, O beautiful land of Freedom,
Hold fast the faith which made and keeps you great.
With you, with you abide the faith and hope,
In this dark hour, of agonised mankind.
Hold to that law whereby the warring tribes
Were merged in nations, hold to that wide law
Which bids you merge the nations, here and now,
Into one people. Hold to that deep law
Whereby we reach the peace which is not death
But the triumphant harmony of Life,
Eternal Life, immortal Love, the Peace
Of worlds that sing around the throne of God.

THRICE-ARMED

THUS only should it come, if come it must—
Not with a riot of flags and a mob-born cry,
But with a noble faith, a conscience high
That, if we fail, we failed not in our trust.
We fought for peace. We dared the bitter thrust
Of calumny for peace, and watched her die,
Her scutcheons rent from sky to outraged sky
By felon hands and trampled into the dust.

We proffered justice, and we saw the law
Cancelled by stroke on stroke of those deft hands
Which still retain the imperial forger's pen.
They must have blood — Then, at this last, we draw
The sword, not with a riot of flags and bands,
But silence, and a mustering of men.

THRICE-ARMED

They challenge Truth. A people makes reply,
East, West, North, South, one honour and one might,
From sea to sea, from height to war-worn height,
The old word rings out — to conquer or to die.
And we shall conquer! Though their eagles fly
Through heaven, around this ancient isle unite
Powers that were never vanquished in the fight,
The unconquerable Powers that cannot lie.

Though fire destroy her flesh, and many a year
This land forgot the faith that made her great,
Now, as her fleets cast off the North Sea foam,
Casting aside all faction and all fear,
Thrice-armed in all the majesty of her fate,
Britain remembers, and her sword strikes home.

THE SONG-TREE

GROW, my song, like a tree,
As thou hast ever grown,
Since first, a wondering child,
Long since, I cherished thee.
It was at break of day,
Well I remember it,—
The first note that I heard,
A magical undertone,
Sweeter than any bird
— Or so it seemed to me —
And my tears ran wild.
This tale, this tale is true.
The light was growing gray;
And the rhymes ran so sweet
(For I was only a child)
That I knelt down to pray.

Grow, my song, like a tree.
Since then I have forgot
A thousand friends, but not

THE SONG-TREE

The song that set me free,
So that to thee I gave
My hopes and my despairs,
My boyhood's ecstasy,
My manhood's prayers.
In dreams I have watched thee grow,
A ladder of sweet boughs,
Where angels come and go,
And birds keep house.
In dreams, I have seen thee wave
Over a distant land,
And watched thy roots expand,
And given my life to thee,
As I would give my grave.

Grow, my song, like a tree,
And when I am grown old,
Let me die under thee,
Die to enrich thy mould;
Die at thy roots, and so
Help thee to grow.
Make of this body and blood
Thy sempiternal food.
Then let some little child,

Some friend I shall not see,
When the great dawn is gray,
Some lover I have not known,
In summers far away,
Sit listening under thee.
And in thy rustling hear
That mystical undertone,
Which made my tears run wild,
And made thee, O, how dear.

In the great years to be?
I am proud then? Ah, not so.
I have lived and died for thee.
Be patient. Grow.

Grow, my song, like a tree.

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